

CULTURAL CROSSROADS

A PUBLICATION OF THE MAYOR'S MULTICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ■ CITY OF LINCOLN, NEBRASKA ■ WINTER 2004-2005

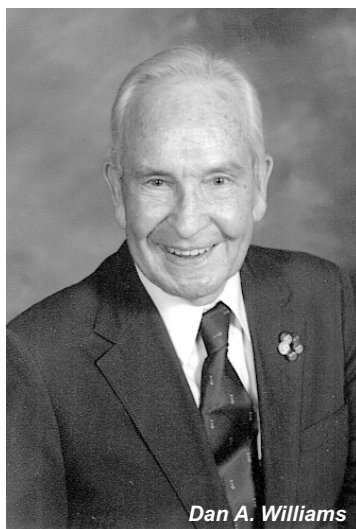
A FORCE FOR CHANGE

Dan A. Williams Resigns as President of CARD

By Larry Williams and Sandi Moody, Lincoln Human Rights Commission

After leading Citizens Against Racism and Discrimination (CARD) for the past 14 years, Dan A. Williams resigned as President at the November planning committee meeting. With regrets, the members accepted his resignation. Williams will continue to serve as a member of the planning committee and other organizations that promote equal opportunity and justice for all.

There are few people in the City of Lincoln who command as much respect and admiration as Dan. His entire life has been devoted to a variety of efforts geared toward promoting harmony and trust among persons of different ethnic and racial backgrounds. He has advanced the causes of human and civil rights throughout his professional and community service career. In addition to his service to CARD, he has served with distinction and honor on the City Library Board, Stand for Children, Community Peacemakers and the Malone Community Center Board. He has received numerous awards, including the Liberty Bell Award from the Lincoln Bar Association, an



Dan A. Williams

"I like to think of Dan as the conscience of this community. His strong voice and unswerving commitment to justice will always be heard. His fight for equal opportunity will never cease."

Mayor Coleen J. Seng

NAACP award recognizing contributions in multicultural education, and a national Peace and Justice Award from the United Churches of Christ.

Dan is quick to share his belief that all people must and should live in a community that does not harbor racial or ethnic division. He believes strongly that racism, prejudice and discrimination are wrong and must be opposed. The CARD mission reflects his wish for our community and world: "...Lincoln, Nebraska will be recognized as having the best race relations of any city in the United States."

In his farewell letter to the members of CARD, Dan wrote, "Early in the last century, the great Black leader W.E.B. DuBois predicted that racism would be the leading issue for America in the 100 years ahead." Dan believes that if DuBois were alive today, he would still see racism as an issue in the 21st century.

Dan further notes in his farewell letter that Lincoln has changed in the last 10 years. "We have received many new neighbors and members of our

community from all over the world. In some instances we have opened our arms to our new neighbors, but in many other ways, we have not. It is imperative that this is dealt with in a positive and constructive way. If this is done, Lincoln will be a more lively, interesting and



Williams is congratulated by Joyce Welsch, City Affirmative Action Officer, after she presented him with an appreciation award at an October reception for the unveiling of the Community Declaration Against Discrimination.

prosperous city. If not, troubles are inevitable."

Dan cares about his fellow members of the human race. His concern for all doesn't stop at the city limits of Lincoln. He hopes that all of humankind can enjoy the great

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opportunities that this country has to offer, without racism, prejudice and bigotry.

"Through his life, Dan has shown us that the Christian faith demands, in the concreteness of our struggling world, a serious commitment to justice, equality, inclusiveness and peace for all."

Joel Gajardo, MAC Member

"On behalf of all who believe in this cause, thank you, Dan, for your courage, your wisdom

and your commitment," said Larry Williams, Executive Director of the Lincoln Human Rights Commission. "We realize our work is not done and, with your guidance and continued involvement, we will fulfill the mission of CARD to have the best race relations of any community in the nation."

Those interested in serving as CARD President can contact a member of the nominating committee: Joyce Welsch (441-3871), Larry Williams (441-8691) or Vern Williams (489-4091).

A President will be selected at CARD's annual membership meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday, January 27 in room 302 at the Southeast Community College administration building, 301 South 68th Street.

Changes Coming At Cultural Centers

Both the Asian Community and Cultural Center and the Hispanic Community Center are moving to 2615 "O" Street. Asian Center Director Modesta Putla said the center will move from 140 South 27th by the end of January. Hispanic Center Director Holly Burns said that organization will make the move from 2300 "O" Street in March. The two agencies plan to work together on projects. At the Indian Community Center, 1110 Military Road, Interim Director Bobby Robinette said January 15 is the closing date for applications for that agency's director position.

2004 GREAT PLAINS SYMPOSIUM A SUCCESS



Milo Mumgaard (left), Executive Director, Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest, accepts the Gerald R. Henderson Human Rights Award from Larry Williams, Director of the Lincoln Human Rights Commission.

The 2004 Great Plains Symposium on Employment Issues drew 90 people to Lincoln on October 19, 2004 to focus on employment discrimination issues. The Lincoln Commission on Human Rights (LCHR) sponsored the event in partnership with the Greater Lincoln Workforce Investment Board.

The keynote speaker, John Schmelzer, Attorney Advisor of the Office of Field Programs at the

U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission (EEOC), spoke on the history of the civil rights movement. He noted that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the third most important piece of legislation ever passed by the U.S. Congress, surpassed only by the Marshall Plan and the Social Security Act.

Other presenters included Joseph Mitchell, Regional Attorney with the EEOC in Denver; Bill Harding, Lincoln attorney; Mr. Steve Willborn, Dean and Schmoker Professor of Law at the University of Nebraska College of Law; and Dr. Christy Horn, ADA and Section 504 Compliance Officer of the University of Nebraska. Lincoln attorneys Bob Evnen and Vince Powers concluded the conference with an interactive conversation on a typical employment discrimination complaint. The luncheon speaker was Helen Abdali-Soosan Fagan, Diversity Coordinator for BryanLGH Medical Center, who spoke on "Creating a Culturally Diverse Environment and Workforce."

The Gerald R. Henderson Human Rights Award, named in honor of the first director of the LCHR, was presented to the Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest for its work in the area of human and civil rights.

"We were very pleased with the conference and felt that the presenters provided symposium attendees with needed information on various aspects of employment discrimination law," said LCHR Director Larry Williams. "We look forward to a bigger and better conference in 2005."

Council Votes on Defense of Liberty Resolution

On a four-to-three vote in September, the Lincoln City Council joined about 350 other local governments in the U.S. in passing the Defense of Liberty Resolution. The resolution urges federal officials to change sections of the USA Patriot Act that "unduly infringe upon fundamental rights and liberties as recognized in the United States Constitution and its Amendment." The Council vote came after about five hours of public testimony. The resolution can be found online at www.sjtv.info/Pages/DefOfLibRes.html



Martin Luther King Jr. Day

"Remember! Celebrate! Act!
A Day On...Not a Day Off!"

The official observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day is Monday, January 17. Local activities include the following:

- Teens Influencing Equity (TIE) at Scott Middle School will have its 8th annual celebration at 8:15 a.m. on January 13 in the school gym. MAC member Thomas Christie will be honored as the newest member of the Martin Luther King Jr. Wall of Fame.
- The 12th annual Freedom Breakfast is at 7:30 a.m. January 14 at the Embassy Suites. Advance tickets are required. For information, call 472-5126.
- The state observance is at 11:45 a.m. January 14 in the Capitol Rotunda. For information, call 471-2035.
- The 10th annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Youth Rally January 17 includes a program at 8:30 a.m. at the UNL Union Ballroom; a march to the Capitol at 10 a.m.; and a program at 10:30 a.m. in the east legislative chamber at the Capitol. For more information, call 441-4664.
- UNL will award the 2005 Chancellor's "Fulfilling the Dream" award at 2 p.m. January 17 at the Ross Media Arts Center, followed by a reception at 3 p.m. at the Van Brunt Visitors Center Great Hall. For more information, call 472-0085, 472-6151 or 472-9315.
- Many other events are planned at UNL from January 18 through 21. For more information, see the Web site at mlkweek.unl.edu.
- A community worship service is set for 7 p.m. January 17 at Mt. Zion Baptist Church, 3301 N. 56th Street. For more information, call 467-0274.
- The 10th anniversary Martin Luther King Jr. banquet January 22, sponsored by the Afrikan People's Union, begins with a reception at 5 p.m. at the UNL City Campus Union Centennial Room. Tickets are required. For more information, contact Candy Alexander at apu_candy@hotmail.com.

PLANNING UNDER WAY FOR NEXT RALLY



Emcees for the 2004 event were MAC member Amir Azimi (left) and Bob Wolfson of the Anti-Defamation League.



Fairbury Brand's "Der Viener Schlinger" was popular with the children.

Lincoln's first "No Place for Hate" Rally drew about 1,500 people to Pioneers Park July 17. The rally was organized in response to a gathering of the National Socialist Movement at the State Capitol the same day. The rally at the park was such a success, a second rally is being planned for Saturday, July 16, 2005 at Pioneers Park. For more information, contact Susan Scott, YWCA Executive Director, at 434-3494, ext. 111.



The Lion Dancers from the Asian Community and Cultural Center performed.

CITY PARTNERS WITH NFBN ON "COMPUTER OPTIONS"

At its convention in October, the National Federation of the Blind of Nebraska (NFBN) issued a proclamation thanking Mayor Coleen J. Seng and Aging Services Director June Pederson for partnering with the NFBN to revitalize the Computer Options program, a program for blind people, primarily those over age 55. The program is now offered at the Downtown Senior Center, 10th and "O" streets. For more information, call 441-6507.



HALL OF FAME COMMISSION TO MEET IN 2005

The Nebraska Hall of Fame Commission will meet in 2005 to select the next honoree. A date has not yet been released. The Commission voted last spring to select the late U.S. Senator Kenneth W. Wherry for inclusion in the Hall of Fame. The nomination of Wherry was opposed by citizens because of his involvement in removing homosexuals from government posts in the 1950s. The Commission later vacated its decision after the Nebraska Attorney General found its secret vote in violation of open meeting laws. The Commission later decided to postpone any action until 2005 because state law mandates that one person can be added to the Hall of Fame every five years. Red Cloud, the last inductee, was chosen in January 2000. Public comment will be allowed at the next Commission meeting. For more information on the next meeting, contact Lawrence Sommer, Director of the Nebraska Historical Society, at 471-4745, or write him at P.O. Box 82554, Lincoln, NE 68501-2554.

Corporate Involvement Focus of Human Rights

C E L E B R A T I O N

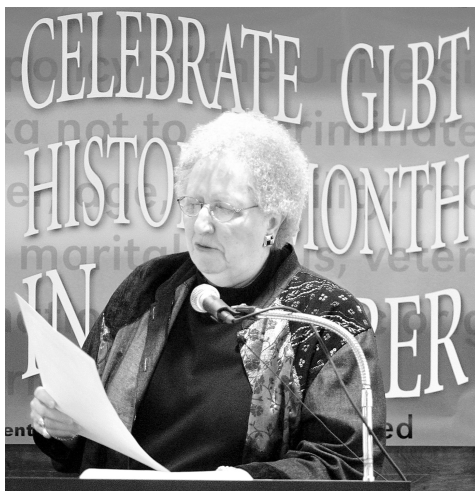
About 70 people participated in a celebration of the United Nation's Declaration of Human Rights December 4 at First United Methodist Church. Event sponsors included the United Nations Association of Lincoln, Altrusa International, Prairie Peace Park, Amnesty International, United Ministries and MOSAIC.

Speakers included Milo Mumgaard, Executive Director of the Nebraska Appleseed Center; Steve Larrick, researcher and former Green Party candidate for Congress; Philip Hugly, retired UNL Professor of Philosophy; and Linda Shafer, former Director of Diversity at State Farm Insurance Company. The program was facilitated by Ginny Wright, representing Altrusa International. They discussed their thoughts on how corporations have advanced and can advance human and civil rights. Through an interactive process, the participants came up with ideas for improving the potential of corporations.

Chris Sayre provided musical background and inspiration for the discussion. The program concluded with a tour of the human rights sculptures on display at the Nebraska Wesleyan campus. Many organizations had resource tables at the event.

Don Tilley of Prairie Peace Park said he was "very pleased with the attendance and the extent to which all shared their hopes, aspirations and convictions."

Those interested are invited to attend the next meeting of the Human Rights Coalition at 5 p.m. January 25 in the conference room of Lincoln Commission on Human Rights, 440 South 8th Street.



GLBT History Month

Mayor Seng declared October 2004 as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender History Month at a UNL ceremony to mark the observance. The proclamation stated that "...respect for differences is a critical defining characteristic of a city, a campus and a free and open society." UNL Chancellor Harvey Perlman also spoke at the event.

Photo courtesy of Kelly Benson, Daily Nebraskan



Rivers Addresses NAACP Banquet

About 350 people attended the annual NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet November 13 at the Cornhusker Hotel. The keynote speaker was Rev. Nelson Rivers III, Chief Operating Officer of the NAACP. He has worked for the NAACP for more than 26 years. Since 1999, he has trained more than 10,000 leaders through the most extensive leadership training program in the history of the NAACP. He was one of the key organizers of the 2000 march that attracted more than 50,000 people to South Carolina's Statehouse to protest the flying of the Confederate Battle Flag. In July 2004, he was awarded the Medgar Evers Award of Excellence as the top NAACP staff official.

In his speech, Rivers challenged his audience to become strong and courageous leaders capable of motivating and inspiring young people to develop their own leadership skills. Leadership, he said, is not about doing what is popular and trying to make it right. It is about doing what is right and doing it over and over until it is popular.

"Leaders have vision that can be articulated," he said. "You must challenge (young people) to expect excellence and nothing else."

Rivers thanked Mayor Seng for her leadership and her commitment to inclusion.

The NAACP presented Community Service Awards to Pete Ferguson of Leadership Lincoln and Susan Scott of the YWCA. The Lenora Letcher Award was presented to Colonel and Mrs. Paul Adams.

MEET the MAC



Colette M. Mast

Colette M. Mast, an enrolled member of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, grew up on the Winnebago Indian Reservation in Nebraska. She moved to Lincoln in the mid-1990s to attend UNL. She has a master's degree from UNL in Curriculum and Instruction. She currently works part-time with the Indian Center and is pursuing a Ph.D. in teacher education. Colette is the proud mother of a son, Chase.

FIND OUT MORE African Community Center

The African Community Center, a project of the Lincoln Interfaith Council, invites Africans in Lincoln to participate. Project facilitator Kelly Smith said the group's mission is to connect Africans with one another to foster a sense of community and to identify needs for services. She said the center works with people of all income levels and all ethnic groups. The center is based at the "F" Street Recreation Center, and those wanting more information can call 477-6926.

Highway To Be Named For Native Americans

The Nebraska Highway Commission voted this fall to recommend that an 87-mile stretch of western Nebraska highway from Sutherland to the Kansas line be named the "Great Plains Indian Highway." The highway designation was supported by the Kansas-Nebraska Highway 25 Association and four Nebraska tribes. The designated highway is near many Native American sites, including Massacre Canyon near Trenton.

Congratulations To...



Amir Azimi, who was elected Chair of the Mayor's Multicultural Advisory Committee for 2004-2005, and Holly Le, who was elected Vice Chair.



MAC member Thomas Christie, who received the 2004 Nebraska Wesleyan University Alumni Achievement Award.



MAYOR'S MULTICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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**Mayor Coleen J. Seng's Office
441-7511**

Designed by Citizen Information Center

The mission of the Mayor's Multicultural Advisory Committee is to identify and recommend policies and strategies that enhance and support the full and equal partnership of people of diverse racial, cultural, economic, gender and disabled communities in City government and the Lincoln community.

Editorial Policy

This is a publication of the Mayor's Multicultural Advisory Committee of the City of Lincoln. Material appearing in this publication shall be in accordance with the purpose, goals and official positions of the committee.

Submissions by community groups and individuals are welcome and will be considered for publication based on the following criteria: the article's compliance with the goals and official positions of the committee; the article's relevancy to the designated theme of that quarter's newsletter; and the length of the article. Articles may be accepted as written, edited or declined for publication.

Responsibility for final decisions lies with the committee chair and newsletter editors. Inquiries about this publication may be directed to the Chair of the Mayor's Multicultural Committee, Amir Azimi, or Vice Chair, Holly Le.



***If you need translation assistance for
Cultural Crossroads, please call 474-3950
for referral information.***

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